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Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 3 and 16. Please amend Claims 1 and 14. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1. (Currently Amended) A computer network communications method comprising the steps of:

transmitting from a client to a server a request to establish a connection;

iteratively

(a) maintaining the connection in the absence of a substantive message, wherein maintaining the connection includes transmitting an indicator a single character indicator pre-established to indicate a non-substantive message from the server to the client at short intervals; and

(b) transmitting from the server to the client a substantive message upon existence of the substantive message at the server.
- 2-3. (Canceled)
4. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting a substantive message further includes transmitting from the server to the client a predefined signal indicating existence at the server of the substantive message.
5. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 4 further comprising the step of receiving at the server a client ready message indicating that the client is prepared to accept the substantive message.

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6. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein transmissions between the client and the server occur using HTTP protocol.
7. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein client side transmissions are implemented at least partly in HTML.
8. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein client side transmissions are implemented at least partly in JAVA.
9. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein client side transmissions are implemented at least partly as an ActiveX control.
10. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the request to establish the connection includes an identifier that uniquely represents a current client application.
11. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting a substantive message includes the server transmitting as substantive messages to at least one client new offers and/or updates to offers in a trading application.
12. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in Claim 11 wherein the step of transmitting a substantive message further includes the server transmitting between two clients counter offers and respective replies, such that instant messaging between the two clients is effectively provided.
13. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting a substantive message further includes the server exchanging substantive messages between two clients and thereby providing instant messaging.
14. (Currently Amended) A computer network communications system comprising: